tonnes of metal Scrap will be required by mini steel plants.

(c) Total arisings of Metal Scrap in the country during this year are expected to be about 2.00 million tonnes.

(d) The gap in the domestic availability and demand of the item is proposed to be filled by import of Metal Scrap in the form of Scrap/ Sponge Iron/Hot Briquetted Iron.

Reduction of import duty on melting scrap, sponge iron, etc.

2972. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether melting scrap, sponge iron and hot briquetted iron are imported in the country; if so, the quantity of each item imported during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to reduce import duty on these items to bring it at par with import duty on billets;

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(d) if the answer to part (b) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) The quantity of Carbon Steel Melting Scrap & Sponge Iron imported during the last three years was as under:—

S. No.	*Commodity*	Year		
		1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
1	Carbon Steel Melting	631	720	810
2	Sponge Iron	66	23.7	42.1

Hot Briquetted Iron has not been imported so far.

(b) to (d) Carbon Steel Melting Scrap, Sponge Iron etc. are the raw materials for production of Ingots/ billets. Therefore Customs duty on both these items is not comparable. However the Government have received certain representations for reduction in the import duty on melting scrap etc. used by Electric Are Furnace units, which are under consideration.

Import of billets

2973. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantity of billets imported during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) what amount of foreign exchange was spent on these imports; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to stop its import and develop indigenous industry?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) and (b) During the last three years, i.e., 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85, Steel Authority of India Limited, the then